

II. Vision

At a workshop in May of 2001, Trail Advisory Committee members developed a vision statement for the entire trail corridor as well as for the three distinctive segments that make up the trail.

Corridorwide Vision

The Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail is a largely off road, multi-use trail network serving as the southern terminus of the five-county Schuylkill River Trail and hub for a regional trail system that includes Cobbs Creek Bikeway, the Botanic Trail, and the Delaware County/Philadelphia segment of the East Coast Greenway. The non-motorized trail network provides safe and comfortable expanded opportunities for close to home recreation, education and interpretation by linking communities in Philadelphia and the Tinicum Township area with schools, parks, and unique cultural, historic and scenic attractions. The trail network also serves commuters through multi-modal connections to pre-existing transit facilities, promoting efficient travel among major transportation hubs in Center City, University City, and south and southwest Philadelphia; and strengthening connections among neighborhoods and access to shopping and employment centers. The trail is a destination in itself, as part of the nationally recognized East Coast Greenway, and benefits the region as a catalyst for economic revitalization. As powerful visual attractions, water and other natural, cultural and industrial features are incorporated into trail design and interpretation, protected and enhanced through sustainable development, and public access to the waterfront is enhanced and expanded at select locations for recreational and fitness activities.

Segment #1 Vision (Bartram's Garden to Fort Mifflin)

The Bartram's Garden to Fort Mifflin trail segment serves as the southern gateway to the Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area, celebrating the industrial and cultural heritage of the lower Schuylkill while providing a diversity of landscape experiences that include softer, greener areas and the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers as key focal points for interpretation and recreation. Schuylkill east and west bank crossings connect the dense neighborhoods in south and southwest Philadelphia to one another and to important community resources—Bartram's Garden, Fort Mifflin, and Southwest Water Pollution Control Plant—that offer close to home recreational and educational opportunities. Land uses support greenway and trail development while recognizing the importance of active industries. The trail reinforces positive interactions among diverse communities, improves the quality of life, and promotes economic revitalization and the redevelopment of industrial lands in southwest Philadelphia. The trail provides safe commuting opportunities for employees of Philadelphia International Airport and nearby businesses who live in southwest Philadelphia and other areas of the city.

Segment #2 Vision (Fort Mifflin to Essington, with access to the Philadelphia International Airport and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge)

The Fort Mifflin to Essington segment is the core of the trail, emphasizing the Eastwick Transportation Center and the Philadelphia International Airport as intermodal transportation gateways that allow trail users to move easily among bus, train and trolley stops in southwest Philadelphia, access the airport, and travel to destinations throughout the region. The airport is

the East Coast Greenway hub in southeastern Pennsylvania, and utilizes the trail to provide visitors on layover, airport employees and area residents with opportunities to recreate and visit area attractions. This trail segment provides significant off road opportunities for leisurely recreating, parallels the Delaware riverfront as closely as possible, and provides public access for boating, fishing and other related recreational uses. The trail provides access to scenic views and natural areas along the riverfront, while protecting, enhancing, and interpreting unique and sensitive natural features. The neighborhoods of Lester and Essington, nearby Delaware County boroughs such as Norwood, and Philadelphia residents are re-connected with once isolated but important historic, recreational and natural sites. The trail is a vehicle for instilling pride of place and a sense of shared community identity, including an appreciation and understanding of the surrounding marshland ecology as well as existing and historic businesses and industries important to the area's economic development. Area industries and businesses benefit from economic development activity associated with the trail, and their employees use the trail to exercise and recreate.

Segment #3 Vision (John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge to Bartram's Garden via Cobbs Creek Parkway)

The John Heinz to Bartram's Garden segment completes the 20-mile loop trail, utilizing the Cobbs Creek Bikeway as the main connector between John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum and Bartram's Garden on the Schuylkill River in southwest Philadelphia. The wildlife refuge is the interpretive gateway and a key trail destination, accessed from Philadelphia International Airport, Tinicum Township and surrounding boroughs, and Philadelphia neighborhoods, while the Blue Bell Inn is the key destination and focal point for the Cobbs Creek Bikeway, serving as an adjunct interpretive center for the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail. The trail incorporates a diversity of landscape experiences and scenic views, from the sights and sounds of the urban environment, to enhanced and restored green areas, and protected natural areas with wildlife habitat, and provides trail users with an appreciation and understanding of Darby and Cobbs creeks as historical waterways. The trail re-establishes safe, close to home pedestrian and bicycling connections to parks and wildlife habitat (Morton Morton House in Norwood Borough, John Heinz NWR), environmental education centers (Cusano, Cobbs Creek), cultural features (Blue Bell Inn) and other important community resources, allowing opportunities for resource based learning. Communities adjacent to the trail can easily access it, and are linked together through it, thereby instilling a broader sense of community and improving the quality of life.

III. Planning Process

The draft trail development study report is the culmination of a four-year planning process which began late in 1997, when a group consisting of the consulting firm Campbell Thomas and Company and representatives from Historic Bartram's Garden and Fort Mifflin on the Delaware, Inc. requested the assistance of the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS RTCA). They requested that NPS RTCA study the feasibility of extending the Schuylkill River Trail further south to Fort Mifflin at the Schuylkill's confluence with the Delaware River.

This core group became the nucleus for the project team that would work with the Trail Advisory Committee, consisting of community representatives, Philadelphia city agencies, Delaware County and Tinicum Township representatives, non-profits, and major public and private landowners, to broaden the geographic scope of the trail to include Tinicum Township, and the Philadelphia International Airport area and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge as major trail hubs and interpretive centers. The focus of the project was also broadened from a trail linking two major historic attractions to a 20-mile loop that addressed multi-modal linkages and the need to reconnect communities with their important resources—recreational, cultural, historic, natural, as well as employment centers and shopping areas. The Trail Advisory Committee (TAC) was also expanded, from 15 organizations and agencies to approximately 27 active members currently, with an additional 35 organizations and individuals who coordinate regularly with the TAC (see appendix VII. D. for a description of these organizations, their primary focus and mission, and their relationship to the trail project).

A. Trail Development Study Methodology

During FY98, the project team—including Martha Wolf, Executive Director of Historic Bartram's Garden; Dori McMunn, Executive Director of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware; trail consultants Steve Hammell and Bob Thomas from Campbell Thomas & Company; and Julia Bell and Dave Lange, planners with the National Park Service—defined the project's geographic scope and a wide range of possible alternative trail routes.

The project team identified potential project supporters and stakeholders, developed an extensive mailing database, and conducted over 80 interviews with federal, state and local agencies; various non-profits with missions complementing general project objectives; major landowners within the trail corridor; and community organizations. These interviews helped the project team assess existing information and plans for the lower Schuylkill, potential recreation opportunities and issues, and additional contacts. The list of interviewed organizations can be found in the appendices.

Some examples of the many interviews during 1998, 1999 and 2000 include the Philadelphia Streets Department and City Planning Commission, in order to determine land ownership, rail and street rights-of-way status for the airport area and to update city agencies on the status of the trail project; the Delaware County Planning Commission regarding plans to reconstruct Hog Island Road and connect it to Essington, and the implications for trail safety; Day & Zimmerman, consultants working on construction projects at the Philadelphia International Airport, to obtain updated information on the status of airport construction plans and potential impacts to the trail project; and Tinicum Township officials regarding the realignment of Hog Island Road and potential for off-road trail use. Interviews with the United Parcel Service regional operations

identified the organization's potential concerns regarding trail use of Hog Island Road in terms of traffic volume and hours of operation generated by UPS operations.

In 1998, the project team concentrated on consolidating digital map information for the project study area and developing a resource inventory for the trail corridor using GIS mapping capabilities and database. ArcView GIS coverage's and file attributes for Delaware County were obtained through the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and the NPS acquired additional GIS land use data for Philadelphia County to add to the GIS database for the project. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission provided streets and hydrology data for Philadelphia, Montgomery, Chester, and Bucks counties. From the regional scale data for Philadelphia and Delaware counties, a regional map of major trail systems that link to Fort Mifflin-Tinicum Trail was created. In addition, a map of the airport area was developed using Philadelphia Water Department GIS data, with the addition of AutoCad drawings of Philadelphia International Airport facilities and a digital orthophoto of the airport area. The AutoCad file was converted into a GIS map of the proposed trail corridor in the airport area. These maps were also used for presentations to project stakeholders.

The existing digital information was merged with Tinicum Township tax parcel data to create a seamless base map for the entire trail corridor, including existing, planned and proposed trails; SEPTA train routes; major and secondary streets; streams and rivers; county boundaries; industrial and airport properties; abandoned rail lines; and resources such as parks, open green space, schools, and historic and cultural attractions.

Although some private funds were secured in 1998, it was not until November of 1999 that Fort Mifflin on the Delaware obtained a \$15,000 grant through the Pennsylvania State Heritage Parks program for the feasibility/development study of the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail corridor, and the final match for the grant. The Schuylkill River Greenway Association administers and distributes the state Heritage Parks funding for the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor. In April of 2000, the contract for the trail development study was awarded to Campbell Thomas & Company, a Philadelphia architectural and community planning firm known for its expertise in similar trail and greenway projects. The consultant was assisted by a project study team consisting of the Executive Director of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware and planners from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. By May of 2000, preliminary concept planning for the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail was complete, and a Trail Advisory Committee had been formed to provide input on the trail development study and help the study team devise public outreach strategies to build support for the trail.

The first Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail bike tour occurred in May of 2000 with members of the study team and Trail Advisory Committee. The purpose of the bike tour was two-fold: to familiarize the Trail Advisory Committee with the proposed trail corridor and potential alignments and their condition, and also as a reconnaissance survey to provide information for the trail development study's resource assessment. A series of reconnaissance surveys with the study team followed during 2000, as part of an effort to resolve outstanding issues related to the trail inventory and analysis of alternative routes.

The reconnaissance surveys included site visits to John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge to identify preferred bike/pedestrian trail routes, and to Philadelphia International Airport to explore safe, secure access into the airport from Route 291 and Tinicum Island Road. Concurrently, the study team received updates on development and construction projects that would incorporate the trail or impact it in some way. The study team also organized a field reconnaissance survey of the Mud Island dredge disposal facility with Schuylkill River Development Corporation and the

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to explore the possibility of a spur trail to access the Schuylkill and Delaware riverfronts. USACE owns and operates the Mud Island facility. Interviews were conducted with USACE operations and planning staff of the Philadelphia District to identify issues and opportunities related to potential trail use of Mud Island dike service roads accessing disposal cells.

Research conducted as part of the trail inventory and analysis included the clean-up status of EPA Superfund sites along Darby Creek and Enterprise Avenue in southwest Philadelphia and potential impacts to alternative trail alignments; trail use liability for trails on federal and private lands, as part of the management issues analysis for trail development study; and the process for using EPA Supplemental Environmental Project funds for trail development projects.

B. Public Participation

Trail Advisory Committee Workshops

The study team conducted a series of 4 workshops with the Trail Advisory Committee throughout 2000 and 2001, during the trail development study planning process. These workshops were held in different locations throughout the trail corridor, in order to encourage representation from organizations in all sections of the corridor.

More than 15 organizations and agencies with an interest in a revitalized lower Schuylkill were present for the first Trail Advisory Committee meeting that marked the initiation of the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail Development Study on May 17, 2000. Government agencies participating included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Delaware County Planning Commission, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Fairmount Park Commission, and Philadelphia Streets Department. Other stakeholders participating included major landowners along the proposed trail corridor such as Philadelphia International Airport, private organizations supporting greenways and trails such as the East Coast Greenway Alliance and Schuylkill River Development Corporation, and historic preservation interests such as Friends of the Blue Bell. At this first meeting, the study consultant Campbell Thomas & Company presented an overview of the project. Trail Advisory Committee members shared their organizations' goals and concerns for the trail, and discussed their roles and responsibilities during the study and beyond. Their immediate charge was to advise the study team on possible trail alignments and links and conduct public outreach to develop support and gather input for the study; however, their long-term role is to implement the recommendations of the trail development study. Information from the May 17 meeting helped the study team to develop purpose and goal statements to guide the trail development study.

At a workshop in September of 2000, the Trail Advisory Committee adopted the final project purpose and goals statements, identified opportunities and constraints to trail development, and explored the feasibility of various trail segments and alignments. Workshop participants were asked about the most engaging trail experiences they have had, and the qualities of other trails that they have found appealing.

At the March 8, 2001 Trail Advisory Committee workshop, participants developed the key elements to be included in vision statements for the entire trail corridor as well as the three main trail segments. Participants also developed rough goal statements for the entire trail corridor as well as the three segments. The workshop results provided the basis for the study team's draft

vision and goal statements for the trail, which were finalized following the next Trail Advisory Committee workshop in May of 2001. The March workshop also resulted in a list of potential actions relating to the goal statements, which were refined by the study team.

At the May 14, 2001 workshop the Trail Advisory Committee reviewed and finalized the vision and goal statements developed during the previous workshop, identified support functions necessary to carry out trail implementation, identified potential roles of trail partners in providing those functions, proposed lead organizers and conveners, and participated in discussions related to engaging public support for the project and determining potential trail user benefits as compared to costs.

Following the completion of the draft Trail Development Study Report and review by the Trail Advisory Committee, the committee was reconvened April 21st, 2003. The purpose of the workshop was to understand and agree to revisions to the study report based on major substantive comments, understand the short-term and long-term alignment options, agree on partner roles in implementation, and identify top-priority trail segments and programmatic actions to implement within a one-year timeframe. The Trail Advisory Committee (TAC) heard project status reports for the Philadelphia City Bicycle Network, Pennsylvania Bicycle Route E, the Route 291 Beautification and Greenway Corridor, Botanic Trail segment of the Schuylkill River Trail, and the Philadelphia International Airport's Master Plan. The TAC agreed to six top priority actions to undertake during the coming year: 1) determining the appropriate structure and continuing role of the TAC; 2) providing a Trail Coordinator to take a leadership role in assisting organizations and agencies in trail implementation; 3) locating funding for engineering of the trail segment between 4th Avenue and PHL airport in Tinicum Township; 4) developing a trail work program; 5) developing trail identity, including an outreach and education program; and 6) exploring design users for various trail segments.

Coordination with Local/Regional Trail Efforts

During the course of the trail development study a number of additions to the Trail Advisory Committee occurred. However, the Trail Advisory Committee does not represent the extent of public involvement for the project. The study team also utilized pre-existing membership networks of non-profits representing trail interests, such as the East Coast Greenway. NPS staff and the consultant working on the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail Development Study met with the East Coast Greenway (ECG) Alliance to help develop a Pennsylvania trail committee for the ECG. This state committee was critical to coordinating trail projects in the Philadelphia area and for providing input on the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail throughout the study process. The Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail study team helped plan the "East Coast Greenway in Pennsylvania" conference in the fall of 1998, which was intended to determine the main spine of the East Coast Greenway, designated a National Millennium Trail, in the Philadelphia area. The Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail concept was presented to conference goers, thus gaining enhanced visibility in the region.

In addition, the study team provided a description of the potential Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail segments and other connected trails for the East Coast Greenway Alliance database and Mid-Atlantic State of the Trail report, and submitted additional information on alternate trail routes to the Philadelphia Streets Department as part of the database for the City Bicycle Network. In 2000, the study team continued to participate in East Coast Greenway State Committee meetings, and provided information for an ECGA survey on status of trail segment developments. The study team has continued to participate in the Pennsylvania State

Committee meetings for the East Coast Greenway, more recently contributing trail information for the East Coast Greenway Master Plan/Needs Assessment.

Additional coordination with Tinicum Township and the Delaware County Planning Department was important in incorporating bikeway/pedestrian planning into the Route 291 beautification project that would connect with the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail. The Delaware County Planning Department also assisted the project team in incorporating trail development concerns into the reconstruction project for Hog Island Road, a potentially important right-of-way for the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail that connects to Delaware County bikeways. Additional coordination on related trail projects occurred with Parsons Brinkerhoff and Mencke & Mencke (respectively the lead planning and design firms for Cobbs Creek Parkway and the 291 corridor in Delaware County).

Coordination with the Schuylkill River Development Corporation occurred through NPS participation in the Tidal Schuylkill Master Plan, a multi-year planning effort starting in 2001 that looked at current and future land use along the tidal Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. The preferred alternative considered recreational uses and ecological restoration along the lower Schuylkill, with the Schuylkill River Trail forming the recreational spine of a regional trails network. The Tidal Schuylkill Master Plan calls for the Schuylkill River Trail to be extended from the Philadelphia Art Museum to Gray's Ferry Avenue along the east bank and from Bartram's Garden to Fort Mifflin on the west bank. Several parcels along the east bank north of Gray's Ferry Avenue have been assembled for this purpose, with SRDC facilitating the process. The SRDC is represented on the Advisory Committee for the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail.

Public Outreach & Media Communications

During the early stages of the trail project, prior to the initiation of the trail development study, a four-page "case statement" brochure was created to develop awareness of and support for the project. The draft trail case statement was reviewed by key stakeholders such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Philadelphia International Airport prior to its publication to solicit their reactions to the trail concept. The simple black-and-white brochure, which presented benefits and highlighted key trail resources, was initially distributed to federal and local government agencies whose jurisdictions include the trail corridor, and also to major corporate landowners within the corridor; however, the brochure was placed on the project web site in 1999 to make it more widely available to the public.

During 1998 the study team supplemented distribution of the brochure with individual interviews to gain input into the trail concept and additional information on the challenges and opportunities the trail presented. The study team developed a project proposal for the Philadelphia International Airport, which included information about the Baltimore-Washington International Airport's loop trail and its application as a possible model for the Philadelphia airport, and trail related benefits to the airport. The project team also met with Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation to present the trail concept and identify outstanding questions regarding the disposition of land ownership, and rail and street rights-of-way for the airport area. The project team and Delaware County Planning Department met with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, where the discussions centered on USFWS concerns and appropriate involvement on the trail project.

Additional interviews and meetings took place during 1999 and 2000 that provided input for the trail study. These included Friends of Blue Bell Inn, an historic site along the trail route, to explore interpretive opportunities to link the site with the trail project; Fairmount Park Commission, to discuss the opportunity to link the trail project with the Fairmount Park Natural

Lands Restoration and Environmental Education program through Cobbs Creek Bikeway; and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia office, regarding a possible riparian restoration initiative for the lower Schuylkill, coordination with NPS RTCA activities in the area, and the goals of the trail project.

The project team took advantage of existing forums and communications vehicles to present the trail concept to a wide audience. These forums included the monthly PennDOT Southeastern Pennsylvania bicycle/pedestrian coordination committee meetings in Saint Davids (PA), the Friends of Philadelphia Parks newsletter, and the PA Environmental Council's Greenspace newsletter issue focusing on SE PA trails. The trail concept was also presented at a Southeastern Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Task Force meeting and press conference in Eddystone, Pennsylvania highlighting grassroots efforts to enhance the 291 transportation corridor and Delaware riverfront in Tinicum Township.

In 1999, the study team developed a web site for the trail project with links to related sites of partner organizations as well as a one-page fax newsletter, posted on the web, that updated project partners on the status of the trail development study. The web site and newsletter generated increasing requests for information on the trail from state and local agencies such as the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; private organizations such as the Delaware County Convention & Visitors Bureau and Urban Partners, a planning firm studying economic redevelopment opportunities in southwest Philadelphia; and private citizens.

NPS RTCA also developed a fact sheet for the trail project, which was posted on the agency's Philadelphia Support Office web site. Throughout the trail development study process, the study team added to an extensive project contact database, contacting organizations that expressed interest in the project in the past and distributing project background materials to new and potential Advisory Committee members.

Public outreach and publicity for the trail included planning special events and developing media relations. In October of 2000, the study team led a trail tour with Trail Advisory Committee members and other interested parties to familiarize them with proposed routes and on-the-ground conditions as well to receive input on how to address opportunities and challenges for trail development. The study team prepared a tour orientation packet, managed logistics, developed a tour itinerary, photographed key trail features, and provided commentary to tour participants regarding trail inventory and analysis findings.

The trail development study process included a public meeting, with press coverage, and a second public event is planned to coincide with the release of this draft report to the public and would take the form of a celebratory event. The first public meeting consisted of an open house at the Mercy Wellness in Southwest Philadelphia in December of 2000. The study team and Trail Advisory Committee members planned, organized and facilitated small group discussions on community needs, concerns, and desires concerning the trail and the feasibility of potential alternative routes. Participants wrote their comments directly on trail segment maps. More than 15 organizations and agencies participated, including residents from Tinicum Township, nearby Delaware County boroughs, and southwest Philadelphia. The study team shared the issues and opportunities identified by the Trail Advisory Committee during previous workshops. Results of the workshop were included in news articles about the trail development study that appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Delaware County Times.

Public outreach does not end with the completion of the trail development study. The draft study report was placed on the web for review and comment by the Trail Advisory Committee

and members of the public in the Fall of 2002, from November 21 through December 10, and based on these comments further revisions were made in the Winter of 2002/3. Public participation will expand to accommodate additional organizations that can provide assistance as trail implementation moves forward, coordinated through the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, East Coast Greenway Alliance, and Clean Air Council.